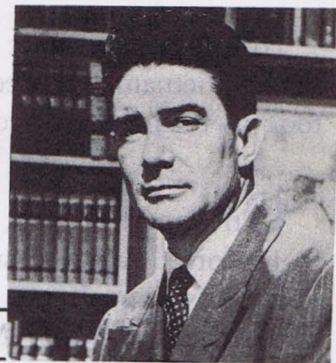


THE Dan Smoot Report

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DAN SMOOT

WHAT WE SHOULD DO IN VIETNAM

When constitutional conservatives (generally labeled rightwing extremists) criticize President Johnson's policies, they are motivated by love of their own country: *they think the President's policies are harmful to the United States*. Leftwing extremist critics of President Johnson's Vietnam policies, on the other hand, seem to be motivated by sympathy with communists.

Nonetheless, the President (always harshly intolerant of his rightwing critics) has displayed remarkable tolerance for the leftwing criticism of his policy in Vietnam. How can we explain this attitude toward leftists who violate the Selective Service law by burning draft cards; who violate sedition laws by counseling young men to evade service in the Armed Forces; who violate personal and property rights of law-abiding citizens by staging public demonstrations that often bring turmoil to entire communities?

One answer is obvious: communists, pro-communists, pacifists, ultra liberals, and assorted beatniks and idiots who oppose our Vietnam war on grounds that it is an evil aggression against the Vietnamese people have been immensely helpful to President Johnson. Their opposition has misled many Americans into believing the President's Vietnam policy must be right, because its noisiest critics are so obviously wrong. The President and his spokesmen and supporters have craftily exploited this situation.

Many Americans see the glaring inconsistency of fighting communism 10,000 miles away while refusing to fight it in Cuba — and while coddling communists at home.⁽¹⁾ They know that President Johnson's Vietnam policies are dragging us into a disaster that can be even worse than the Korean disaster was; but they fear to criticize lest they thus align themselves with leftists who criticize for pro-communist reasons.

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To understand what the United States *should do* in Vietnam, we need to review steps which took us to the present deadly impasse.

On August 8, 1945, six days before the United States forced Japanese surrender, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan. On August 9, three Soviet armies moved into Manchuria (Northeastern China, bordering Russia and Korea). Before pulling out of Manchuria (less than a year later), the Soviets had set up a communist puppet state in North Korea, and had armed Chinese communists with Japanese and American equipment.⁽²⁾

From their Manchurian base, Chinese communists intensified their war against Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang resisted American demands that he negotiate with communists, until George Marshall forced him to comply. The result was communist conquest of China in 1949.⁽²⁾

On June 24, 1950, communists attacked South Korea. President Truman sent American troops to drive communists out and to unify Korea (north and south) under the anti-communist government of Syngman Rhee. Washington and United Nations officialdom would not, however, let Americans and South Koreans win. In July, 1953 — after 54,246 Americans had died — President Eisenhower accepted a Korean armistice on terms proposed by “neutralist” India, but dictated by communists. Our original objective of unifying Korea under an anti-communist government was not only abandoned: it was not even mentioned in the negotiations and armistice.⁽²⁾

Trying to restore shattered American prestige, the Eisenhower administration declared that we had stopped communism in Korea, and that communists realized they could conquer no more territory in Asia. The administration expressed firm determination to protect French Indochina from communists.⁽²⁾

But — the Korean war having given an incalculable boost to the prestige and military strength of communism — communists converted scattered guerrilla action against French Indochina into total war. On May 7, 1954, communists

captured Dienbienphu, the last French stronghold in northern Vietnam. Our aid to France was wasted; communists had done what we had pledged never to let them do.⁽²⁾

In 1954, an international conference at Geneva divided the old French Union into four nations: neutral Cambodia, neutral Laos, neutral South Vietnam, and communist North Vietnam.⁽²⁾

An International Control Commission — composed of representatives from Canada, India, and communist Poland — was given the job of supervising the truce agreements. Communists had guerrilla bands throughout the area. They had been given all of North Vietnam, with the understanding that they would disperse their rebel groups in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam, and would respect the neutrality of those three independent nations. They never did disperse their guerrilla bands, but used them to harass the three nations. The International Control Commission ignored, or tacitly approved, communist violations.⁽²⁾

In 1955, the Eisenhower administration decided to make its next firm stand against Asian communism in Laos — a landlocked, primitive, jungle kingdom of about two million people, mostly illiterate. The Laotian economy went on the American taxpayers' dole. We trained, equipped, clothed, housed, fed, and paid the salaries of the Laotian army and police forces; and we directly financed more than 80% of the total civilian budget of Laos.⁽²⁾

In December, 1960, our side at last seemed to be winning. A strong anti-communist (Prince Boun Oum) was the premier of a new government; and communist forces were driven from Vientiane (capital of the nation) which they had controlled for months. The Soviets suggested an international conference to settle the trouble in Laos: they wanted to switch the war from battlefield to conference table — where anti-communists could be forced to form a coalition government with communists.⁽²⁾

The United States rejected the Soviet proposal in December, 1960; but on March 23, 1961, Presi-

dent Kennedy reversed the American position. In 1961 and 1962, W. Averell Harriman (our special emissary to Laos) did what George Marshall had done in China 15 years before — forced the anti-communist government to surrender control to a communist-dominated coalition. Thus, with the help of our government, Laos became a major base for communist operations against South Vietnam.⁽²⁾

While forcing Laos to *submit* to communism, the Kennedy administration — early 1962 — announced that *the* determined stand *against* Asian communism would be made in South Vietnam, in cooperation with the Diem government. By October, 1963, Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, said our war against communism in South Vietnam was going so well that 1000 American military personnel could be removed within a month, most remaining Americans by the end of 1965.⁽²⁾

On November 1, 1963, Diem — apparently at the instigation of our own government — was overthrown and murdered; and the tide of victory started running for the communists.⁽²⁾

In February, 1965, President Johnson revealed that he had authorized bombing in North Vietnam, previously a privileged sanctuary for communists.⁽²⁾

Two full months of the bombing apparently did little damage to the communist enemy in North Vietnam (though it did great damage to President Johnson's political opposition at home). On April 7, 1965, President Johnson took another bold step: he virtually offered the communists a billion-dollar bribe if they would quit fighting to negotiate.⁽³⁾ The communists sneered.⁽⁴⁾

On November 29, 1965, Robert S. McNamara said, in a press statement at Saigon:

"We have stopped losing the war."⁽⁵⁾

Apparently, communists had been winning all year, despite our bombing and greatly increased effort on the ground.

By December, 1965, U. S. troops in Vietnam had increased to almost 200,000 (from 3164 in December, 1961);⁽⁶⁾ and signs were ominous that commitment of our men in Vietnam may soon

double our commitment (500,000 soldiers) at the peak of the Korean war.⁽⁷⁾

Yet, on December 10, Ho Chi Minh, president of communist North Vietnam, saying he would never accept President Johnson's repeated proposal for unconditional discussion, confidently boasted that North Vietnam could fight us another 20 years, or longer.

What is now happening in Vietnam is impossible to know. American public relations officials seem resolved to convey the impression, regardless of truth, that we are beating the communists so badly they will soon beg for peace.

Note the following passages from "The Untrue Story of War," a syndicated news column published December 7, 1965, written by Dennis Warner, an Australian newspaperman who has been covering the war in Vietnam:

"American Army public relations in Saigon are the worst I have known in any war anywhere

"It was easier to tell the true story of the war in Indo-China under the strict censorship then applying than it is under the current Saigon system.

Even at the worst periods of the Indo-China war, the French only concealed (and sometimes expelled), but the current crop of American public relations officers . . . are engaged in the business of turning defeats into victories.

"Mr. Robert McNamara, U. S. Secretary of . . . Defense, expressed surprise at the end of his recent visit to Saigon that the Viet Cong and the Viet Minh had been able to mount such a military effort. McNamara . . . has been surprised for years. And well he might be if he pays any attention to some of the news as it emerges after treatment in the Saigon public relations mills

"Military difficulties and reverses are acceptable to most nations. What no one will accept indefinitely, and especially in a war of this sort, is the persistent attempt to win by pretense what has not been won on the ground."⁽⁸⁾

Note the following passages from "Misinformation Fills Viet Nam War Reports," a column distributed by New York Times News Service, written by Charles Mohr (published December 2, 1965):

"A steady stream of misinformation about the war in Vietnam is reaching the American public

"When the American Special Forces camp at Pleime came under siege last month, military spokesmen reported early in the fight that 90 enemy bodies had been counted and that some of them were hanging on the camp's barbed wire

"Later, when a reporter reached the besieged camp and said he wanted to photograph the bodies on the barbed wire, the grimy, bearded, exhausted defenders broke into bitter laughter.

"They said that there had never been bodies on the wire and that they had never made the original count of 90 enemy dead

"So great is the pressure for body-count figures, which often cannot be realistically obtained, that soldiers of the Airmobile Division . . . joke . . . about Saigon's request for the 'WEG,' or 'wild-eyed guess.'"⁽⁹⁾

Note the strange reports on our bombing of a power complex at Uong Bi, near Hanoi, our first attack on a really vital industrial installation in North Vietnam. U. S. Air Force fighter-bombers struck on December 15. Reports said the power complex was mostly destroyed. On December 21, a swarm of attack bombers from three U. S. Navy carriers hit the same target again. Once more, the power complex was reported virtually wiped out. On December 22, U. S. jets again bombed the same target. In the first raid, we lost one plane. In the third raid, three of our aircraft were shot down, one of them by a Soviet missile.⁽¹⁰⁾

Asked why it was necessary to "destroy" the power complex three times, in quick succession, military authorities said:

"It would be unlikely that after one attack with conventional weapons, all of the generators would be so badly damaged that they could not be put back into operation after either minor or major repairs."⁽¹⁰⁾

Here again is evidence that our government, leading the world to believe that we are hitting the enemy with all we have, is sacrificing the lives of our fighting men, while restricting their striking power to prevent them from accomplishing their mission.

The Christmas truce was another disturbing instance of endangering our soldiers for political reasons that make no sense. Communist attacks seemed to increase during the Christmas period when our side was restrained from aggressive action, ordered to fire only when fired upon.

We have been trying to defend South Vietnam against communists since 1954. Since President Johnson ordered bombing of North Vietnamese targets in February, 1965, we have, in our President's own words, committed ourselves to do all that is necessary — all that we can — to stop communist aggression in South Vietnam. Yet, after all this effort by mighty America, against the little communist puppet state of North Vietnam, communist military strength is greater than ever before. The number of North Vietnamese troops engaging ours in South Vietnam seems to be increasing every month. Their weapons are as abundant and as good as ours; and the battles seem to be growing ever bigger and bloodier.

What is wrong? Though President Johnson has committed us to sacrifice our fighting men, in unspecified and unlimited numbers, and has promised to spend the material resources of our nation no matter the consequences, he has not committed us to *win the war* in Vietnam. It is very clear that *victory* is not President Johnson's objective. It is probable that if our armies ever reach the point where victory over communists seems imminent, they will be stopped by our own government as they were in Korea.

Remember when the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee held hearings (in 1962) concerning the Kennedy administration's muzzling of military officers who spoke out strongly against communism as the enemy of the United States? The Subcommittee learned that the State Department did not want American officials (military or civilian) to talk about "victory" over communism. The State Department said:

"The word 'victory' has a militaristic and aggressive ring 'Victory' also implies an 'all-or-nothing' approach, leaving no room for accommodation."⁽¹¹⁾

That is still the policy of the administration in power. Note particularly President Johnson's April 7, 1965, speech — the one in which he tried hardest to explain our objectives in Vietnam:

"The first reality is that North Vietnam has attacked the independent nation of South Vietnam. Its object is total conquest

"Another reality: the deepening shadow of communist China. The rulers of Hanoi are urged on by Peking

"Why are these realities our concern? Why are we in South Vietnam? We are there because we have made a national pledge to help South Vietnam defend its independence

"We are there to strengthen world order

"Our objective is the independence of South Vietnam and its freedom from attack

"In recent months attacks on South Vietnam were stepped up. Thus, it became necessary for us to increase our response and to make attacks by air. This is not a change of purpose We do this to increase the confidence of the brave people of South Vietnam And we do this to convince the leaders of North Vietnam . . . [that] we will not be defeated not grow tired not withdraw, either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement

"Once this is clear, then it should also be clear that the only path . . . is the path of peaceful settlement

"There may be many ways to this kind of peace: in a discussion or negotiation with the governments concerned . . . in the reaffirmation of old agreements or their strengthening with new ones

"We have no desire to devastate . . . North Vietnam We will use our power with restraint" ⁽³⁾

The communist objective is total conquest; ours is accommodation.

We are using our air power mainly against the jungle trails, villages, small troop concentrations, and isolated supply depots. We even refrained from knocking out surface-to-air-missiles (SAM) installations when we knew the Soviets were moving in SAMs for use against our planes.

We knocked out some SAM installations *after* our planes had been shot down.

In the past 13 years, our armed forces have spent 53 billion, 800 million dollars on development and production of nuclear weapons. Relatively few of them are world-shattering bombs. Most are tactical weapons designed to save the lives of our own men by giving them weapon superiority. To date, however, *we have not used one nuclear weapon in Vietnam.*

Indeed, we are even short-changing our men in conventional supplies and weapons of war.

On September 14, 1965, the Associated Press reported that boots provided our soldiers in the 101 Airborne Division, fighting in Vietnam, were falling apart faster than they could be replaced, and that some of our men were going into combat wearing tennis shoes (in areas where communists have sowed the ground with sharp spikes that can cripple men without adequate boots). ⁽¹²⁾

On the same day (September 14, 1965) the Army announced that it was ordering new jungle boots with steel soles for use in Vietnam. ⁽¹³⁾ Development of such a boot was ordered in 1962. ⁽¹⁴⁾

On September 19, 1965, the Associated Press reported that surgery could not be performed on a score of wounded U. S. paratroopers in the 85th Evacuation Field Hospital near Qui Nhon, Vietnam — because of a shortage of sterile pads and blood. Penicillin was also in short supply. ⁽¹⁵⁾

For many months, American helicopters on low-flying missions were helpless targets for communists on the ground, because the communists' machine guns had longer range than guns on our helicopters. This condition, widely publicized a few months ago, has not been mentioned recently. It may have been corrected, or it may still exist.

In consequence of a one-third reduction in Army procurement (ordered by Secretary of Defense McNamara in December, 1964), the Army is now short of communications systems, anti-aircraft warning systems, mortars, trucks, troop carriers, helicopters, machine gun ammunition,

and ammunition for the M-14 rifle.⁽¹⁶⁾ Much equipment of the kinds now needed in Vietnam has been sold or given to foreign governments.

Shortages in Vietnam have become so serious that equipment has been transferred from our strategic reserve supplies in Europe and the United States.⁽¹⁶⁾

In November, 1965, the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee made a three-week study in Vietnam. Here are some of the Subcommittee's findings:

- Artillery shells are in short supply.
- Heavy bombs are unreliable because they are old.
- One Navy ship sent to Vietnam was so rusted that a pencil could be pushed through its hull armor.
- Water purification tablets are no good.
- Soviet-made ammunition clips are better made than US-made clips, which frequently jam.⁽¹⁶⁾

President Johnson vows that we will not withdraw from Vietnam "under the cloak of a meaningless agreement." Yet, he makes it very clear that we will quit, and give North Vietnam aid, as soon as Ho Chi Minh says he will abide by the meaningless agreement of 1954 — which he has been violating since the day it was made.

What do the communists have to lose in the Vietnam war, as now conducted? Mostly men; and the manpower available to Asian communists is almost limitless. They have us at the end of a 10,000-mile-long supply line, draining us of manpower and resources. Every day they can prolong the war, they enhance their prestige by holding their own against powerful America. If they grow tired, they can stop, and go on the American dole until they are rested, rebuilt, and ready to go again.

Though a protracted, limited war in Vietnam can bleed us to death and make us an object of contempt in the eyes of all Asia, an American victory would be relatively easy. Indeed, on December 6, 1965, General John P. McConnell (Air

Force Chief of Staff) said the United States has the military capability of destroying North Vietnam and forcing its surrender, "virtually overnight." But, he explained, President Johnson's policy is to avoid such action, for humanitarian and political reasons.⁽¹⁷⁾

Some of North Vietnam's war material is produced in her own factories, but most comes to her (from America's NATO allies and from communist countries) through the seaport city, Haiphong. Determined bombing could readily destroy Haiphong and all major industrial plants in North Vietnam. This would prevent North Vietnam from supplying her forces in the South, and would cost fewer American lives, and less money, than the bloody ground fighting is costing.

If Ho Chi Minh knew we intended to destroy him and his communist government, he would probably come begging for terms, instead of boasting that he can fight us as long as he pleases.

Would this stop communist aggression in Asia? It would not. The fountainhead of all communist trouble-making in Asia, and the source of all communist power, are in China, not in North Vietnam.

Fighting limited, peripheral wars against communists in Asia weakens us, strengthens communism: it feeds communist propaganda mills with fodder about American imperialistic aggression; it gives communist dictators a patriotic appeal to their enslaved peoples; it provides communist armies training and experience in the use of modern weapons. Each limited war is concluded with a negotiated truce which gives communists essentially what they were fighting for in the first place. This stimulates them to make further conquests, and gives credence to their taunt that America is a paper tiger which roars, but never wins.⁽²⁾

President Johnson says he is determined to stop communist aggression in Asia, regardless of cost. If so, he had better stop bombing jungle trails south of Hanoi, and start hitting Peiping, capital of communist China. Communist aggression in Asia cannot be stopped while communists control mainland China.

It is not, however, *our responsibility* to defend Asia. That is a job for Asians. If there are not enough Asians willing and able to fight for their own freedom, then Asia cannot be saved from communism, no matter how many American soldiers are sacrificed. President Johnson says:

“We did not choose to be the guardians . . . [of Asia] but there was no one else.”⁽³⁾

He is dead wrong about that, too. Chiang Kai-shek, President of free China, commands powerful armed forces — and wants to fight communism in Asia at its source, the Chinese mainland.

In a message to the Chinese people on October 10, 1965, President Chiang Kai-shek said:

“In carrying out our program of national recovery by a counteroffensive against the public enemy of the world — the Chinese communists — we will positively not call upon any country to join us. Our revolutionary forces alone are sufficient to overthrow the Peiping regime . . . and re-establish the peace of Asia and the world on a sound foundation

“The anti-communist movement of our people in various parts of the mainland . . . is nearing the point of explosion. This movement is snowballing fast

“As soon as our program of national recovery by a counteroffensive is fully launched, the situation will so change that the crises in Korea and Vietnam will be ended; the dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia settled; subversion in Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Burma terminated; and the threat of worldwide nuclear war extinguished at its source.”⁽¹⁰⁾

On April 12, 1965, Chiang Kai-shek said:

“Anti-Communist Asian nations, such as the Republic of China [free China], that have well-trained armed forces . . . should have their hands unshackled so that they can use their own strength to launch a crusade against a rebel regime in their own country. In so doing, they will be destroying the sanctuary of the Chinese Communists’ aggression against the free world. The United States need not send a single soldier to fight on the Chinese mainland

“The destruction of . . . [the Peiping] regime and the avoidance of a direct armed conflict with the Chinese communists . . . should be the . . . purpose of the U. S. policy in Asia.”⁽²⁾

We are now so deeply involved in Vietnam that we ought to go ahead and win as quickly as possible, using our best weapons to minimize the loss of American lives.

Simultaneously with starting our strike for victory in North Vietnam, we should announce to the world that Chiang Kai-shek has our blessing to move against communist China as he pleases. We should instantly stop all foreign aid — most of which goes to nations that are hostile toward the United States. We should divert to Chiang Kai-shek all foreign aid materials already in process of production or shipment.

As soon as our offensive in North Vietnam causes the communist government there to collapse or surrender, we should prepare to get out of Asia, *at our* convenience, and leave Asians to manage their own affairs and fight their own wars in their own way.

WHO IS DAN SMOOT?

Born in Missouri, reared in Texas, Dan Smoot went to SMU getting BA and MA degrees, 1938 and 1940. In 1941, he joined the faculty at Harvard as a Teaching Fellow, doing graduate work for a doctorate in American civilization. From 1942 to 1951, he was an FBI agent: three and a half years on communist investigations; two years on FBI headquarters staff; almost four years on general FBI cases in various places. He resigned from the FBI and, from 1951 to 1955, was commentator on national radio and television programs, giving *both* sides of controversial issues. In July, 1955, he started his present profit-supported, free-enterprise business: publishing *The Dan Smoot Report*, a weekly magazine available by subscription; and producing a weekly news-analysis radio and television broadcast, available for sponsorship by reputable business firms, as an advertising vehicle. The *Report* and broadcast give *one* side of important issues: the side that presents documented truth using the American Constitution as a yardstick. If you think Smoot’s materials are effective against socialism and communism, you can help immensely — help get subscribers for the *Report*, commercial sponsors for the broadcast.

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FOOTNOTES

- (1) For additional information, see this *Report*, "Embracing The Enemy We Fight," August 16, 1965. Reprint prices at bottom of Page 1.
- (2) For full information on the Asian-Vietnam background, see the following *Reports*: "The Story of Laos," April 29, 1963; "Vietnam and Lodge," April 27, 1964; "Our Asian Wars," May 11, 1964; "What Are We Doing In Vietnam?," January 18, 1965; and "President Johnson's Two Wars," June 21, 1965. Reprint prices at bottom of Page 1.

- (3) Transcript of President Johnson's speech at John Hopkins University, April 7, 1965, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, April 9, 1965, pp. 644-6
- (4) Remarks of U. S. Representative Melvin R. Laird (Rep., Wisc.), *Congressional Record*, November 15, 1965, pp. A6610-9 (daily)
- (5) AP report inserted in article by Charles Mohr, *The New York Times*, November 30, 1965, pp. 1, 3
- (6) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, May 7, 1965, p. 853
- (7) Special news program presented by ABC at 9:15 p.m. Central Standard Time, December 26, 1965; ABC State Department correspondent stated that President Johnson was ready to commit up to 1,000,000 men to Vietnam.
- (8) *The Dallas Morning News*, December 7, 1965, p. 1A
- (9) *The Dallas Morning News*, December 2, 1965, p. 32A
- (10) UPI article by Darrell Garwood, *The Dallas Morning News*, December 27, 1965, p. 9A
- (11) *Military Cold War Education And Speech Review Policies*, Hearings before the Special Preparedness Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, 1962, 3502 pp. plus *Report*, 203 pp.
- (12) AP from Saigon, *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 1965
- (13) UPI from Natick, Mass., *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 1965
- (14) *Parade* magazine, September 26, 1965
- (15) *San Jose (California) Mercury*, November 2, 1965, p. 18
- (16) "Washington Report" by Bill Schultz, *The Shreveport Journal*, November 16, 1965, p. 6A
- (17) AP from Detroit, *The Dallas Times Herald*, December 6, 1965, p. 10A
- (18) *Free China Weekly*, October 10, 1965, pp. 3, 6

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